

CRP Practice CP21

Filter Strips

Indiana –May 2007 (ver. 1.3)

Filter Strip Program Job Sheet



Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

WHAT IS A FILTER STRIP?

A filter strip is a narrow band of grasses, legumes, and forbs used to limit sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and other contaminants from entering water bodies. In addition, filter strips can provide valuable winter cover, nest sites, nectar and pollen for pollinating insects, and food for wildlife.

Filter strips are typically located on cropland immediately adjacent and parallel to streams, lakes, ponds, ditches, sinkholes, wetlands, or groundwater recharge areas.

WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On fields that meet eligibility requirements for the Conservation Reserve program (CRP) as determined by the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

CRP POLICY

CRP Filter Strips will be installed according to the Filter Strip Standard (393) in the local Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG).

CRP Filter Strips are only eligible on **Cropland** that is adjacent and parallel to streams, sinkholes and karst areas, wetlands, and permanent bodies of water such as lakes/ponds.

The minimum width of the filter strip depends upon the slope of the field, the soil type, and the pollutants contained in the runoff. **For the Conservation Reserve Program, Filter Strips will be a minimum of 20 feet from the edge of the eligible body of**

water, and a maximum of 120 feet from the edge of the eligible water body. If the site already contains existing vegetation, these acres will be included in the calculation of maximum width and included in the CRP Plan, but will not be eligible for payments.

Vegetation for filter strips will generally have stiff, upright growth characteristics, and will be adapted to the site conditions and meet the standards in the local FOTG. Only viable, high quality seed will be used.

For CRP in Indiana, **Native Grasses** (Little Bluestem, Switchgrass, Canada Wild Rye, etc.) **&/or Non-Native grasses & legumes considered wildlife friendly** (timothy, redbud, orchard grass, clover, alfalfa, etc.) **will be encouraged.**

PLANTING

Plant the vegetation according to the attached plan/design sheet. Any changes to these specifications should be approved by NRCS.

All construction and seeding must be completed within 12 months of contract approval to remain in compliance. If circumstances beyond the landowner's control prohibit completion within the first 12 months, the local FSA County Committee may approve an extension to the next construction and planting season.

Site Preparation: It is very important to plant the vegetation into a weed-free seedbed. Weed control efforts should begin prior to planting, and may require multiple applications in both the fall and spring prior to planting. Use herbicides or tillage to eliminate competing vegetation. If necessary for erosion control, seed a temporary cover. Eliminate the temporary vegetation at planting time with tillage or herbicides.

Contact your local Purdue University Extension Agent for specific herbicides to use. **Apply all herbicides according to the label.**

Lime and Fertilizer (Introduced Grasses): Apply lime and fertilizer according to a recent (less than four years old) soil test for establishment of introduced grasses.

Lime and Fertilizer (Native Grasses): Lime and fertilizer should not be applied to native grasses at establishment unless a current soil test shows phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) are in the deficient range or the pH is 6.1 or less. Do not apply any nitrogen (N) during establishment to minimize weed competition.

Seeding Dates

Species/Mix	IN Seeding Dates	Dormant Seeding Dates*
Cool Season Grasses	3/1-5/15 or 8/1-9/15	12/1-3/1
Legumes	3/1-5/15 or 8/1-9/15	12/1-3/1
Warm Season Grasses	4/1-6/15	12/1-4/1
Forbs	4/1-6/15	12/1-4/1

*Increase seeding rates by 25% dormant seeding. Broadcasting of warm season grasses should only be done into a prepared seedbed with protection from erosion as a consideration.

Seed preparation: Inoculate legume seed before seeding with the proper Rhizobia bacteria specific for the species. Re-inoculate seed if it was pre-inoculated more than 60 days prior to seeding. Be careful not to blend seed of varying size, shape and weight as this can make calibration of equipment and seeding uniformity difficult.

No-Till seeding: Use a no-till drill to reduce the risk of erosion and possible loss of seedlings. Ensure the drill is designed to handle the seed being planted (especially important for native grasses). Your local Soil and Water Conservation Districts may be able to assist in locating equipment. Set the drill to provide an ideal planting depth of no more than ¼ inch unless otherwise directed. Seeding native grasses deeper than ¼ inch will lead to potential failure. Soils that are too wet or too dry can also cause improper seed placement.

Conventional Seeding: Use a drill with seven (7) inches or less row spacing or a culti-packer seeder, designed for the seed to be planted. The seedbed should be worked to a minimum depth of three (3) inches and firmed before seeding. Grass seed should be drilled uniformly and seeded no more than ½ inch deep.

Broadcast Seeding: Seed may be broadcast if completed in a uniform manner. Pre-mixing the seed with 200 lbs. per acre of pelletized lime and utilizing an airflow applicator is also effective. Seedbeds should be worked to a minimum depth of three (3) inches and firmed before seeding. The seedbed should be culti-packed before and after seeding. It is acceptable to see up to ⅓ of the seed on the soil surface. Wind speed should be 15 m.p.h. or less when broadcasting.

Weed Control During Establishment Period: Mow, burn, or apply herbicides as needed to control unwanted vegetation until a **Final** Status Review is issued, or for a maximum of three (3) years after planting. Mow when competing weeds are taller than the planted vegetation, and at a height above the planted vegetation.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Noxious weeds and other undesirable plants, insects, and pests shall be controlled, including such maintenance as necessary to avoid detrimental effects to the surrounding land.

After the Final Status Review or three (3) years (whichever comes first), maintain the planting according to your CRP conservation plan. Maintenance activities are allowed only on a spot basis and only if necessary to maintain stand health, maintain stand diversity, or control pests that will damage the CRP cover or adjacent lands. Burning must be in accordance with a prescribed burn plan. MOWING and other maintenance activities are not authorized between April 1 to August 1 to protect ground-nesting wildlife (i.e. - the Primary Nesting and Brood-Rearing season). If maintenance activities are needed during these times, the FSA County Committee **must** approve the maintenance activity **prior to** the activity occurring. Native grasses will not be mowed lower than 12 inches, and non-native grasses lower than four (4) inches.

Mowing for generic weed control or for cosmetic purposes is prohibited.

Limited use of the filter strip as a turnrow or crossing area is authorized if this activity is conducted as part of the planting, cultivating, or harvesting of a crop in an adjoining field. Do not use filter strips as a travel way, cropland headland or a lane for livestock or farm equipment.

Livestock must be excluded from the filter strip.

MID-CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

All new CRP contracts must have mid-term contract management activities scheduled that will ensure plant diversity, wildlife habitat, and protection of soil and water resources. Management activities that will ensure these benefits include: prescribed burning (according to an approved burn plan), strip disking, strip spraying, and interseeding of forbs and legumes. All management activities must be performed according to NRCS Standards and Specifications as found in the FOTG, and CRP policy. **Mid-management job sheets can be found at:** <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CRP/crphomepage.html>.

OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

For optimum wildlife habitat, plant a diversity of grasses, legumes, and wildflowers. These mixtures will provide winter and nesting cover and food for a variety of wildlife. When mowing is necessary, restrict mowing to August 1 - August 20 to allow re-growth for winter cover.

DESIGN and MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

The filter strip will be designed to encourage water to flow in a thin sheet. When water is concentrated, it will be spread across the width of the filter strip.

Filter strips are designed to fill with sediment! To maintain the function and value of filter strips:

1. Any channels or rills must be immediately repaired.
2. Terraces, dikes, berms, trenches, or vegetative barriers can be used to treat concentrated flow areas.
3. Sediment within the filter should be removed before it accumulates to a height higher than six (6) inches. Level and re-establish sheet flow. Re-seed if necessary.

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FILTER STRIP PLANTING DESIGN WORKSHEET CRP CP-21

Landowner:

County:

Farm:	Tract:	Field(s):	Filter Strip #1 – Width & Ac	ft /	ac	Date:
			Filter Strip #2 – Width & Ac	ft /	ac	

RECOMMENDED SPECIES and SEEDING RATE (PLS #/ac = Pure Live Seed Pounds per Acre)

[illegible]

NOTES:

Recommended Wildflowers include:

BEFORE PLANTING in Year:

- ☐ Permanent Fence: _____ : _____ ft = (see attached design)

☐ Water Source: _____ ☐ Pipeline: _____ ft = (see design)

☐ Water Facilities(s): _____ ☐ Livestock Crossing: (see design)

☐ Herbicide₁ (per label): _____ Dates = _____

☐ Herbicide₂ (per label): _____ Dates = _____

☐ Tillage: _____ Dates = _____

☐ Temporary Seeding: _____

☐ Structures, Grading, Leveling, Filling – **See the attached Design Sheet.**

☐ **Apply fertilizer and lime according to an approved soil test and Tri-State recommendations for “ESTABLISHING” Native or Non-Native grasses.**

☐ Other: _____

PLANTING METHOD in Year:

- ☐ **Planting Method:**

Dates = See Seeding Dates on Page 2

(If unforeseen circumstances prohibit the planting of the grass by this date, please contact our office as soon as possible)

POST-PLANTING MAINTENANCE for Pest Control

- ☐ **Mowing: BEFORE FINAL STATUS REVIEW** = mow 12" high when the weeds are 12" taller than the planted grasses
- ☐ **Native Grass = AFTER FINAL STATUS REVIEW* = 12" MINIMUM Mowing Height***
- ☐ **Non-Native Grass = AFTER FINAL STATUS REVIEW* = 4" MINIMUM Mowing Height***
- ☐ Herbicide* (**per label**): ☐ Prescribed Burning*: According to an approved plan
- ☐ Other:*

***NOTE: after the Final Status Review has been issued, MOWING and other activities will not occur between April 1 to August 1, and will occur on a “spot” basis only, unless prior approval is granted by the County Committee.**

Mid-Contract Management Starting In Year:

- ☐ **Prescribed Burning:** according to an approved burn plan Burning will not occur more than once every three (3) years on the same acreage.
- ☐ **Strip Spraying:** Spraying will not occur more than once every three (3) years on the same acreage.
- ☐ **Strip Disking:** Disking will not occur more than once every three (3) years on the same acreage.
- ☐ **Inter-seeding:** Inter-seeding will not occur more than once every three (3) years on the same acreage.
- ☐ **The Specific Mid Contract Management Activity will be decided by the participant in the scheduled year based on condition of the vegetation, site considerations, capabilities of the participant, etc.**
Treatment will not occur more than once every three (3) years on the same acreage. Reimbursement will be dependant on the activity(s) performed based on local FSA Not-To-Exceed rates.

For CRP Mid-contract Management job sheets see:

<http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CRP/crphomepage.html>

LOCATION AND LAYOUT SKETCH & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: